

March 5, 2008

## **PUMPKIN CREEK LAND EXCHANGE**

### **PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING DOCUMENT:**

The Pumpkin Creek Ranch land exchange will consolidate federal land in an area 15 miles south of Miles City that has a checkerboard land-ownership pattern. When completed, the exchange will create a 20,578-acre contiguous block of federal land for the public to enjoy, as well as facilitating a variety of resource programs -- which are less effective on small, isolated land sections.

### **ISSUE:**

This facilitated, two-phase assembled exchange between BLM and The Conservation Fund is now in process.

Phase I included 43 isolated parcels of federal land comprising 14,325.83 acres, and 22 parcels of non-federal land comprising 12,229.15 acres. Seven timely protest letters, one late protest, and ten letters of support were received on the Phase 1 portion. A decision by the Interior Board of Land Appeals affirmed BLM's decision to dismiss the protests and determined that the public interest will be well served through the exchange.

The state director signed the seven decisions for dismissal; no appeals were filed with the Interior Board of Land Appeals. Phase 1 was officially completed Feb. 20, 2008.

### **MAIN DECISION OR MESSAGE:**

The BLM plans to acquire the remaining 1,809.17 acres of private land within the Pumpkin Creek Ranch in Phase 2 of the exchange using an estimated 1,407.1 acres of federal lands in Carter County. The value imbalance in Phase 1 of \$21,578 owed to the United States is being tracked through a ledger account, and values will be equalized in Phase 2.

Phase 2 is now in process and should be complete by the end of 2008.

### **BUREAU PERSPECTIVE:**

Issues relating to access to public lands, recreation trends, agricultural needs, and commercial activities such as outfitting have placed emphasis on providing increased opportunities for the long-term public benefit. Management of the area for multiple-use objectives will benefit surrounding communities and visiting recreationists well into the future.

### **CONTACT:**

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